United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1370
13 April 1993

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Secretary-General and UNHCR appeal for aid for former Yugoslavia as food stocks dwindle; UNPROFOR reports 56 people killed by shelling in Srebrenica; Force Commander says United Nations must be allowed to deploy troops and observers.

+ Secretary-General condemns assassination of Cris Hani of South African ANC and appeals to all parties to maintain commitment to democratic elections; Security Council and Anti-Apartheid Committee, in separate statements, underscore need to end violence and pursue negotiations.

+ Upon arrival in Rome, Secretary-General meets with Foreign Minister of Algeria for discussion of Western Sahara and Libya, as well as other African States where United Nations is currently involved.

+ Time is ripe for social development, representative of Denmark tells planning Committee for 1995 World Social Summit.

+ International Atomic Energy Agency to send fact-finding mission to Tomsk nuclear facility.

+ International Fund for Agricultural Development Executive Board ends two-day session after approving 11 new projects for Africa, Latin America and the Near East.

* * *

Warning that emergency supplies for refugees and displaced people would run out within days, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has appealed to the international community for food donations to prevent starvation in the former Yugoslavia.

He said yesterday that not enough food or funding had been provided for the former Yugoslavia despite several conferences and many appeals. A breakdown in the food supply pipeline for the remainder of April was inevitable, he warned.

(more)

For information media--not an official record

In a similar appeal, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Sadako Ogata, said donations were needed to keep more than 3.8 million people alive. In a letter to the foreign ministers of major donor nations, she cautioned that food stocks in the former Yugoslavia would run out within days unless substantial pledges were made immediately, according to a statement issued by the UNHCR today.

Ms. Ogata expressed alarm at the inadequacy of the resources being made available by the international community, saying that in Bosnia and Herzegovina alone, 2.3 million people depended on international assistance for survival.

According to the statement, the UNHCR now has only three-and-a-half days worth of food stocks in warehouses outside Bosnia and Herzegovina, and two weeks worth of food for the humanitarian airlift to Sarajevo. More than 183,000 metric tons of food are needed in the former Yugoslavia from 1 April until the end of June, but only 51 per cent of that amount has been pledged to date. UNHCR needs at least $37 million a month for humanitarian operations there, not including food costs, but has only $20 million available for April and nothing for May or June.

Meanwhile, United Nations military observers in Bosnia and Herzegovina have reported that at least 56 people had been killed and 106 wounded by shelling in Srebrenica yesterday afternoon, according to a press release issued by the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) today. Force Commander General Lars-Eric Wahlgren said it was imperative that both parties to the conflict allow the United Nations to deploy its troops and observers in eastern Bosnia and Herzegovina.

General Wahlgren had called Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic to alert him to the situation in Srebrenica, asking that he assist efforts to end a "disastrous and rapidly deteriorating situation", the statement said. General Wahlgren also wrote to the Serbian military authorities in Belgrade and Pale, saying that the shelling contrasted starkly with assurances from General Ratko Mladic, the Bosnian Serb commander, that he would continue the cease-fire and work towards a peaceful resolution of the situation.

UNPROFOR's Deputy Chief of Mission, Cedric Thornberry, described the shelling as a clear violation of international law prohibiting attacks on civilian targets. "It is an atrocity," he said.

* * *

Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, in a statement issued today, said that he was "deeply chocked and saddened by the tragic assassination" of Chris Hani, leader of the South African Communist Party and National Executive Member of the African National Congress of South Africa (ANC) on Saturday, 10 April.

The Secretary-General condemned the "senseless act of violence", which was aimed at disrupting the peace process in South Africa. He appealed to all

(more)

parties not to allow this incident to derail the multi-party constitutional negotiations but instead to maintain their commitment to achieving a successful conclusion of the talks as soon as possible.

Concerned at the possible escalation of violence, the Secretary-General called upon all South Africans to remain calm and to desist from any actions which might aggravate an already tense situation.

Last night, the Security Council also underscored the urgent need to end violence and to proceed with negotiations for a united, non-racial and deomcratic South Africa.

In a statement read out on its behalf, Council President Jamsheed K.A. Marker (Pakistan) said the talks must not be held hostage by the perpetrators of violence. He reaffirmed the Council's support for efforts towards a peaceful transition to a non-racial democracy in South Africa.

In a related development, the Special Committee against Apartheid has appealed to all South Africans not to allow the assassination to disrupt the process of peaceful change. In a statement issued by its Chairman, Ibrahim A. Gambari of Nigeria, the Special Committee said that the crime had been calculated to derail the renewed multiparty talks which had begun less than two weeks before with the unprecedented participation of 26 political parties and organizations.

* * *

Upon his arrival in Rome this morning, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali met with the Foreign Minister of Algeria for a discussion of Western Sahara and Libya, as well as other African States where the United Nations is currently involved.

According to a United Nations spokesman, the Secretary-General will travel to Turin tomorrow to visit the International Labour Organisation (ILO) training centre there. In the afternoon, he will return to Rome for meetings with the President of the Italian Senate.

* * *

The time was ripe for the international community to put social development at the top of the international agenda, the representative of Denmark told the Preparatory Committee for the 1995 World Summit for Social Development this morning.

Speaking on behalf of the European Community, Bent Haakonsen, Denmark's representative, whose country will host the World Summit, said the event would provide an opportunity to put people at the centre of development and a common framework for the activities of the United Nations. Those activities, in particular with regard to women, children, the young and elderly, as well as the handicapped and other disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, must be reviewed by the Summit and its preparatory process.

(more)

* * *

A three-member team of experts will travel to Tomsk, Russian Federation, tomorrow to review the situation at the Tomsk-7 nuclear facility and the surrounding area following last week's accident, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) announced today.

The members of the team are: Abel Gonzales, Deputy Director, Division of Nuclear Safety, IAEA; Burton Bennett, Secretary of the United Nations Scientific Committee on the Effects of Atomic Radiation; and Geoffrey Webb, Board Secretary of the National Radiological Protection Board of the United Kingdom.

* * *

The Executive Board of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) has ended a two-day session in Rome, having approved 11 new projects for a total cost of more than $197 million.

The new projects, which will be supported by IFAD loans of more than $122 million, will benefit more than 2.2 million people in developing countries in Africa, Latin America and the Near East.

* *** *